

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SSM-03 SAJ-01 DHA-02 ORM-02
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4631
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 0684

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IS, NO
SUBJECT: ISRAELI AMBASSADOR'S CRITICISM OF NORWEGIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS

REF: OSLO 0260

1. WE HAVE DISCUSSED WITH MFA AND NORWEGIAN EMBASSY OFFICERS
THE RECENT PUBLIC CRITICISM BY ISRAELI AMBASSADOR RIVLIN IN
OSLO OF THE CHAIRMAN OF NORWAY'S PARLIAMENTARY FOREIGN AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE WHILE THE LATTER WAS LEADING A GROUP OF NORWEGIAN
PARLIAMENTARIANS ON A VISIT TO THE MIDDLE EAST. THE
NORWEGAIN DCM (HANEVOLD) TOLD US THAT THE VISIT, JANUARY 10-14,
WAS MADE BY A DELEGATION OF 14 MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT FROM
VARIOUS PARTIES AND INCLUDED THREE FORMER PRIME MINISTERS.
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THE VISIT WAS ONE OF A SERIES OF SUCH VISITS BY PARLIAMENTARY
COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN TO SPECIFIC REGIONS OF THE WORLD.
ON THIS TRIP THE DELEGATION VISITED JORDAN, SYRIA AND
EGYPT AND MET WITH HUSSEIN, ASAD AND SADAT RESPECTIVELY.
THE GROUP HAD INTENDED ALSO TO VISIT LEBANON BUT WAS
PREVENTED FROM DOING SO BY HEAVY SNOW WHICH BLOCKED THE
ROAD FROM DAMASCUS.

2. HANEVOLD CONFIRMED THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS SET FORTH IN REFTEL. HE SAID THE COMMENT MADE BY FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN OFTEDAL IN THE REFUGEE CAMP NEAR AMMAN EXPRESSED AN OPINION WHICH WAS SHARED BY THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION AND REFLECTED, ACCORDING TO HANEVOLD, TYPICAL NORWEGIAN REACTION TO A SCENE OF POVERTY. AMBASSADOR RIVLIN, AT A PRESS CONFERENCE CALLED TO CRITICIZE THE RELEASE OF ABU DAOUD, RESPONDED TO A QUESTION ABOUT OFTEDAL'S COMMENT BY SAYING THAT THE NORWEGIAN DELEGATION HAD FALLEN INTO THE FIRST TRAP (SYMPATHY FOR REFUGEES) WHICH IS CUSTOMARILY SET BY THE PALESTINIANS. HE ALSO CRITICIZED THE NORWEGIAN EMBASSY HERE FOR NOT ACCEPTING ISRAELI HOSPITALITY WHICH WAS OFFERED TO THE VISITING DELEGATION. (HANEVOLD EXPANDED ON THIS POINT BY COMMENTING THAT THE MFA HAD BEEN ANNOYED BECAUSE IT HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO TAKE OVER THE PLANNING OF THE VISIT; THE EMBASSY HAD INSISTED THAT IT RETAIN CONTROL OF THE VISIT BECAUSE THE PARLIAMENTARIANS WERE HERE AT NORWEGIAN EXPENSE AND NOT AS GUESTS OF THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT.) AFTER AMBASSADOR RAVLIN'S REMARKS IN OSLO AND THE STATEMENT THERE BY THE NORWEGIAN MFA PRESS SPOKESMAN, NORWEGIAN AMBASSADOR JAKOBSEN CHECKED WITH THE MFA HERE TO DETERMINE WHETHER RIVLIN'S REMARKS HAD BEEN MADE UNDER INSTRUCTIONS. IF THE ANSWER HAD BEEN POSITIVE, THE NORWEGIAN DELEGATION WAS PREPARED TO LEAVE ISRAEL IMMEDIATELY. AS IT WAS, THE DELEGATION EXPRESSED ITS DISPLEASURE BY ASKING AMBASSADOR JAKOBSEN TO SERVE AS OFFICIAL HOST AT A DINNER FOR ISRAELI PARLIAMENTARIANS RATHER THAN HAVING OFTEDAL SERVE AS HOST. WE WERE TOLD SEVERAL DAYS AGO BY CONFIDENTIAL

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THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE MFA (AVINERI) THAT THE INCIDENT WAS "AN INCREDIBLE MESS" AND ONE WHICH SHOULD NEVER HAVE HAPPENED.

3. OTHER THAN THIS UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT, HANEVOLD SAID, THE VISIT HAD BEEN A SUCCESS AND THE NORWEGIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS HAD LEARNED A GREAT DEAL FROM THEIR FIRST HAND OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS. EVEN THE RIVLIN EVENT HAD LEFT NO SCAR ON THE BASIC FRIENDLINESS BETWEEN NORWAY AND ISRAEL AND HANEVOLD'S JUDGMENT WAS THAT NORWEGIAN PUBLIC OPINION HAS NOT CHANGED FROM ITS PRO-ISRAELI ATTITUDE. NEVERTHELESS, HE FELT THAT AMBASSADOR RIVLIN HAS LOST HIS CREDIBILITY IN OSLO AND WILL SOON HAVE TO BE REPLACED. IT MAY BE ENTIRELY COINCIDENTAL, BUT ISRAELI PRESS REPORTED THIS WEEK THAT SYLVIA RAPHAEL, ONE OF THE FIVE ISRAELIS CONVICTED OF MURDERING AN ALLEGED ARAB TERRORIST IN NORWAY IN 1973, WILL BE DEPORTED FROM NORWAY. DUNNIGAN

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